

Stranger Things: One last time by AlecGman

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Summary: A few days have passed after the events of Season 3. Hopper is still missing, Will has still moved away, and everything hasn't gone back to normal in the small town of Hawkins, Indiana. However, their journey still isn't over.

1. The American

Kamchatka, Russia

1985

"No, not the American." The Soviet officer said in Russian to his partner. "The other one."

The officers opened the prison door beside it and found a man inside, cowering in fear from the Soviets. The two officers entered the room and began to grab at the man.

"No, please. Not me. Please, no!" The man yelled in Russian.

The officers never even contemplated what the man was saying as they began dragging him out of his cell. The man continued to yell as they dragged him down the hall. After a few minutes, they came across a large cell of sorts and they forced the desperate man inside. The first officer immediately closed the door and began to seal it closed.

"No, don't do this to me, please." The man began to beg.

The officer refused to acknowledge the man, simply turning the wheel next to the door. However, it wasn't affecting the door. The man turned to face a squeaking noise coming from across the room. He noticed a small trap-door attached to a small rope, being pulled up ever so slightly. The man watched in horror as something began to exit the small space once the door was high enough. He didn't even know how to describe it. The thing came out on all four limbs, standing on its legs once it exited the crawlspace. It towered over the man, giving off a domineering presence and a foul odor. The man was frozen in fear, completely unknowing of what to do. The monster began to approach him with large lunges; the man braced himself against the metal door, waiting for the monster to do something.

"No, get away!" The man yelled.

The monster roared in response; its four part mouth opening to

reveal hundreds of razor, sharp teeth. It lunged at the man, who continued to scream.

The officers simply watched as the man was torn apart by the monster. Limb from limb, seemingly being turned inside out by this thing. One of the officers turned away from the final sight of the man, who was no longer on his feet. Soon, a voice came over the loudspeaker in the room.

"Officers Mikhail and Margosha, report to prison cell #3." The voice said with a very monotone voice.

Officer Mikhail turned to Margosha. "The American? What would they want with him?"

"What do you think? He has knowledge on the other world. He can, and will, help us open a portal once and for all." Margosha responded, confidant and feeling a patriotism for his country.

Mikhail nodded and began walking with Margosha back to the prison cells. Mikhail looked back at the cell to see the monster simply staring at them, blood covering its body.

"What about that thing? Are we not going to lock it up?" Mikhail asked, pointing at the monster.

Margosha simply shook his head. "No, there's no reason to. I'll do it later."

The two officers began walking down the long corridor and eventually came across the prison cell where the "American" was being held. However, unlike its empty status before they took the man away, now there were men standing in front of the cell door. A few more Soviet guards and the lead scientist of the operation.

Margosha and Mikhail saluted the scientist, who saluted them back.

"You're sure that he's harmless? He won't try to escape?" The lead scientist asked, pointing towards the door.

"Yes, besides, even if he tried, he would die before he could get anywhere. Americans are weak that way." Margosha replied.

The lead scientist nodded. "Well, what are you waiting for? Open the door."

Mikhail grabbed the keys off of his belt and stuck a large brown key in the door's lock. The door clicked and could now be opened. Mikhail placed the keys back on his belt and began opening the door, slowly. The Soviet guards held their rifles up, in preparation for a possible escape. However, the door finally opened with no resistance and the lead scientist peered inside the dark room. He reached for Mikhail's flashlight and turned it on to see a man simply sitting on his prison bed. He looked at the man, shook his head, and looked back down.

"Hey, don't look away from me, you know why you're here, American." The lead scientist said, speaking in English, but with a heavy Russian accent.

The "American" turned to face the lead scientist, giving him a blank stare.

"What could you possibly want from me?" The "American" responded.

"Don't be stupid. We wouldn't have kept you alive this long if you weren't useful. Now get up, we have to move." The lead scientist said, walking towards the "American".

"What I did only caused chaos, nothing more. Why don't you just get it over with?" The "American" said with his head down.

The lead scientist shook his head out of frustration and pulled a pistol from his holster. He pointed it at the "American", who gave a blank stare in response. The scientist contemplated shooting, but simply lowered the gun after holding it for a few moments.

"We know who you are, Dr. Brenner. You've created something... extraordinary. A portal to another dimension; a marvelous discovery indeed. But, you can have a lot more power here, unlike in America. You were even able to create superhumans, like Eleven?" The lead scientist said, kneeling down to Brenner's sitting height.

Dr. Brenner simply looked at the scientist. "Can you bring her to me?

If you do, I would be willing to help you."

"Is she your daughter?" The scientist asked, concerned.

Dr. Brenner shook his head. "No, but I've felt like her parent. If you bring her to me, I can help your soldiers become stronger. Stronger than any force on this planet or any other, even America."

The lead scientist gave Brenner a small smile. "I know that you could do that. But you have to help us today and I promise you, that we will bring Eleven here." He said, reaching his hand out to Brenner.

Dr. Brenner shook his hand without hesitation.

2. Salvation

The man almost didn't care anymore, but simple thoughts provoked him to continue. It's not like where he was, was a big surprise anymore. He knew exactly where he was and he had been trapped here for who knows how long. He had no way of telling what time it was, what day it was, or where he was in the world. He kept walking along the desolate road, but the lack of water began to eat away at him. He collapsed onto the soft, mushy ground, which almost comforted his fall.

"Gotta get...somewhere." The man muttered to himself. "Can't...let..."

The man slapped his face, but it didn't help him very much. He knew he had to escape. If he didn't, whatever was down there would kill him. He forced himself to his feet, trying desperately to find something, anything that could help him out of the place he was in. This goddamn place was going to get the best of him. He knew it was going to, there was no way out. He felt like saying goodbye, but there was no one there. The man accepted his fate, he knew there was no way out. Even if he did find a way out, who would find him? With what he was wearing, there would be no chance for someone to save him.

As these thoughts ate away at the man, he soon heard a loud crackling noise. No, it couldn't be, that goddamn thing followed him. Whatever it was, he couldn't let it take him. But he wouldn't go down a coward. He turned to face the crackling noise and realized exactly what it was. It was enough for him to get up and fight. He stood up, his parched throat feeling like sandpaper. He didn't care, he began running towards the noise. The noise was coming from an object coloured black and orange. The man heard the thing behind him roar and heard its footfalls as it rushed after him. He jumped through the orange/black hole and ended up in the exact same place that he had been before. However, it was different somehow, less dark and mushy. The ground felt hard this time.

"Ha, I beat you!" The man yelled, regardless of his parched throat.

He looked at the orange hole to see it closing. However, something

seemed off. It didn't seem right. Why would a portal open now? Despite how long he was down there? Either someone knew he was, or he came across a portal by chance. Before he could continue, he heard footsteps and they were headed towards him. He didn't even bother to get up and look at who or what it was. His head simply laid on the hard ground, staring up at the night sky. The footsteps stopped in front of the man. The man looked up at the figure, which he didn't recognize. The voice that came afterward was very calm and almost compassionate.

"Sir, are you ok?" The woman asked, concerned for the man's health.

Before the man could respond, he was out cold. He knew this was it. He knew there was no going back home. No going back to his daughter. No future for him; it's not like she loved him. He even asked her, but she didn't seem to understand.

The next thing the man knew, he was awake in a hospital. He shook his head as he awoke; his parched throat seemingly gone. The man found himself changed into a hospital gown and attached to an IV tube. Was it his dumb luck? No, it couldn't be. He knew he was dead, what other possibility was there?

A doctor entered the room that the man was resting in. The man knew that he recognized the doctor, he knew exactly where he was. Why else would he be seeing the same damn doctor? The doctor looked at him and smiled.

"Welcome back!" The doctor said, raising his arms in the air.

"Dr. Owens? Where am I?" The man asked, concerned.

"Well, not in the upside down, I can tell you that much. But, what I can tell you, is that not much has changed since you...well...left. We've been monitoring you ever since you...disappeared." Dr. Owens replied, smiling.

The man looked at Owens with anger. "You just left me down there?! With those goddamn things?!"

Dr. Owens raised his hand. "Take it easy. I guess I over exaggerated.

What I meant was, we knew you went inside after the explosion. You're body wasn't anywhere to be found and we knew what that meant. We tried to follow you, but your tracks disappeared after a while. We soon were able to get a portal open, but only for a few short moments. Hah! Looked like it worked."

"So, where am i? Hawkins Lab?" The man asked, sarcastically.

"Actually, you're not too far off. Maybe not Hawkins Lab, per say. But definitely better than that place. We don't torture kids here. This is a replacement lab, not in the same place, but we're using it as such. We still need to monitor the upside down, I'm sure you could understand that." Dr. Owens replied.

"What happened when I was gone?"

"Well, Will Byers and his family moved away, but aside from that, not much. It's been pretty quiet around here actually."

The man immediately lowered his head in sadness. He never got to say goodbye to Joyce, not after the explosion. She turned away, but he didn't expect to survive jumping into the upside down, but somehow he did. She never knew what happened to him. But El, he had to find El, tell her that he loved her and that he wants to keep her safe and make her Eggo's whenever she was upset.

"What about Eleven? Is she ok?" The man asked.

Dr. Owens simply stared at the man for a moment. Not saying a word.

"What happened to her?" The man asked, calmly.

Dr. Owens sighed. "Listen, she moved away with the Byers family, but I don't know why. All I know is she's living a few towns over. I don't know where exactly though. But listen, Jim, you need rest. The last thing you need to do is get out. I promise you that you'll only be in here for a day and then you can go, ok? You don't have to see this ugly face any more than you have to." The doctor said, smiling.

Jim smiled back. At least he was honest and at least El was safe. Dr. Owens began walking towards the door.

"I'll see you later, Jimbo. I've got quite a few things I need to do, so, you know..."

Jim nodded and Owens closed the hospital door. Jim breathed a sigh of relief, but one of sadness as well. Joyce...he couldn't say what he truly felt. Even though she knew well enough already. Jim turned to face a mirror in his room. His mustache had been overshadowed by his beard, which had grown back drastically, completely disgruntled. He knew the person in the reflection. Jim Hopper. Jim Hopper was back in the real world.

3. Dwelling

She remembered that fateful night like any other. She searched the parking lot of the mall, looking for the person she called, "Father". He was nowhere in sight, despite seeing everyone else. She couldn't take it the potential fate of her father; her eyes welled in remembrance of that horrid night.

"El? Are you okay?"

Eleven turned to the voice, revealing it to be Will Byers, who had taken on the role of her foster brother. He was standing outside of her bedroom, looking inside. Tears formed as she shook her head.

"Hopper. I can't stop seeing him. In my dreams, outside... everywhere." Eleven said, looking at her bedroom floor.

Will walked inside and sat next to Eleven on the bed. "Is there anything that I can do to help, El?"

Eleven didn't know how to respond. What would she ask? To bring Hopper back from the dead? She looked at him; a tear falling from her left eye.

"I don't know." Eleven answered with clarity.

Will leaned in and gave Eleven a hug that she wasn't prepared for. Instinctively, she reached around him and clasped her hands behind his back. She began to cry into Will's shoulder with intensity, almost completely sobbing.

"It's alright, El. It's alright. I promise you that...Hop...he's in a better place now." Will said rather calmly.

Eleven nodded as she released herself from Will. "Yeah, maybe."

"He's probably more happy now then...well...I don't know. I don't remember the last time that he was really happy." Will said, shrugging.

Eleven wiped away the tears from her face and gave Will a smile.

Will smiled back as he patted Eleven's shoulder.

"Hey, Will, where are you, buddy?" Jonathan called from outside the bedroom.

Jonathan Byers approached the bedroom and looked inside.

"Hey, it's time for bed." Jonathan started.

He stopped himself after he saw Eleven, her eyes puffy from crying.

"Are you good, El?" Jonathan asked with the same calm voice as his brother.

Eleven nodded. "Will helped. Thanks, to both of you."

Jonathan smiled. "Anytime, El." He turned to Will. "It's time for bed, buddy."

Will chuckled. "Alright, I'll be out in a second."

Jonathan nodded and walked away towards his bedroom. Will turned back to Eleven.

"Well, I guess I should be going then. If you ever need anything, don't be afraid to wake us up, ok?" Will said, placing a hand on Eleven's small shoulder.

Eleven nodded. "I will."

Will smiled and stood up. He walked out of Eleven's bedroom and turned back to her; the doorknob in hand.

"Open or closed?

Eleven shrugged. "Closed, I guess."

Will acknowledged her response and began to close the door.

"Good night, El." Will said, before finally closing the door.

"Good night, Will." Eleven replied, although she was too late before he closed the door.

Eleven wiped her face on her purple pajamas that had a space theme to them with black holes every few spaces or so. She laid down on her bed and pulled the covers over her. She took a deep breath, before turning the lamp off on her nightstand.

Joyce Byers stood outside of her new home, which was indicated by the amount of moving boxes located all over the house, except Eleven's room, of course. She leaned against the wall next to the front door of the house, puffing on her cigarette. Her last one from Hawkins, Indiana. The flavor was very distinct; one that she remembered sharing with Hopper. It tasted horrible, exactly the way Hopper liked it. She chuckled to herself as she took another puff of her cigarette.

"This is to you, Hop." Joyce said to herself, finishing the cigarette.

She threw it down on the porch and stepped on the burning cigarette, putting it out. She knew that the cigarette was her last from a friend...or whatever they were before he passed. Joyce knew who was coming afterwards. Every time was not an exaggeration, HE came every single, goddamn time she finished a cigarette from Hawkins. She turned to her right and leaning against the wall, with the front door separating the two, was Hopper. Well, how she remembered him at least.

Hopper smiled at her as he puffed his own cigarette. He was wearing his beige police uniform, along with his gun holster, carrying his trusty revolver. "Hawkins, Indiana" was on Hopper's left arm, surrounded by the Indiana state seal. She always hated Hop's mustache. She wished he grew his beard back. Hopper's beard was how she remembered it; disgruntled, yet almost a perfect look for him.

"No, this is the last time. I'm sorry, Hop. I wish I could've done more." Joyce said to the hallucination.

"Hopper" simply nodded at her and threw down his cigarette. Joyce trembled as she closed her eyes. She opened them to find that "Hopper" had disappeared.

"No, god!" Joyce said, beginning to cry.

Joyce shook her head. "No, he's gone. Accept it! Stop being a bitch about it and accept it, goddamn it!"

Joyce felt horrible after what had happened to Hopper. She always considered herself responsible. *If I pulled those switches sooner, Hopper would still be here.* They never were able to have the date that they planned together. *Enzo's, tonight at 8. No, 7 was the time.* Joyce placed her hands on her head. Every person that she loved, gone. Taken in some form or another. Lonnie, divorce. Bob, killed by those damn dogs, and Hopper...

"Mom?! What's going on?" Jonathan said, his voice raised.

Joyce turned to Jonathan. "What are you doing up? Don't worry about me, ok?"

Jonathan shook his head and stepped outside, closing the front door behind him.

"Listen, mom. I miss him too, ok? But we have to move on; you have to move past this. People die and Hopper's no exception, ok? Dwelling is not going to bring him back."

Joyce wanted to yell. So badly. She wanted to prove that she was right on her judgement, but she knew that Jonathan was right in the long run. She walked towards Jonathan and gave him a hug.

"I'm sorry, Jonathan. I'm sorry."

Jonathan hugged her back. "It's alright. Let's just get to sleep, ok? We have a long day tomorrow."

Joyce chuckled and smiled as she released herself from the hug. "You're all grown up now, Jonathan." She gave a small smile.

Jonathan led Joyce back inside, guiding her with a calm demeanor. Joyce waved at Jonathan, indicating her goodnight. Jonathan turned back to the front door of the house, which was still open. He walked to the door and looked out into the darkness, unaware of the man with binoculars keeping watch from the surrounding woodlands. The man watched Jonathan close the front door. He dropped his binoculars and reached for his radio.

"Target located inside. Don't make a move until I say so." The man said in a thick Russian accent.

4. History repeats itself

The air was filled with an intensity that hadn't yet been felt before. Everyone in the room remained on edge for what was coming next. Mike Wheeler gave a crooked smile as he looked at the party members sitting around him.

"You feel fear; something that isn't new to you, but it is different kind of fear. One that could only originate from the one of the nastiest beings you would ever come across. This being is one you can't see, but you can feel." Mike said with a sinister grin.

Dustin Henderson, sitting to Mike's right, put his hand on his chin, trying to consider what the creature could be. He decided to take a risky move.

"I'll activate True Sight to see what we'll be dealing with." Dustin said, reaching for the yellow and black D-20.

Lucas Sinclair sat across from Dustin. He gave Dustin a concerned stare.

"What makes you think this thing can be seen with True Sight? Why not just use your lantern to save mana?" Lucas inquired.

"Uh, no. I would rather see what this thing is so we can beat the shit out of it, comprende?" Dustin said, finishing by grabbing the D-20.

Lucas simply shrugged at Dustin's snarky remark and waved his hand, as if to say, just get on with it. Dustin took a deep breath as he readied himself. He tossed the die on the table and he was anxious to see what it landed on. Dustin gave a small as he saw the number "20" being shown.

Mike smiled. "Dustin has activated True Sight and he observes his surroundings. He doesn't know what to consider at first, maybe it was simply just a reflection. But wait, something's off-"

"Oh, shit! What if it's the Beholder?" Dustin said, panicking.

Lucas thought for a moment. "You could be right, but isn't that what

True Sight is supposed to tell you?"

"Well, not exactly. Mike can adjust that however he wants." Dustin said, looking back to Mike.

"Let's just get on with the goddamn game already!" The 4th player yelled.

Lucas turned to the red-headed girl, who was crossing her arms. Maxine "Max" Mayfield was looking back at Lucas.

"Let Dustin do what he needs to do. If he loses mana, so what, he loses mana." Max said, indicating for Mike to continue.

"The Beholder!" Mike yelled, placing the indicated D&D piece on the board.

"Goddamn it! This always happens and we're not ready for this bullshit!" Dustin yelled.

"The Beholder looks at you with a vengeance. This is one that you have killed before, but he has returned with strength that couldn't even be comprehensible. He is here to ensure that everyone responsible for his demise is killed by his own hands. Dustin, your move!" Mike yelled.

Dustin placed his hand on his head. "Shit, I used my mana for True Sight. Gonna have to use a protection spell."

Dustin grabbed the D-20 and tossed it on the table. It rolled and came to a complete stop, with the number "5" on the face of the die.

"Shit!" Dustin cursed.

"Your protection spell begins to form, until it's fortunate failure. The Beholder returns this gesture with a magical attack." Mike grabbed his die and rolled it. "The question is, can you counter?"

Dustin grabbed his die and rolled it again, however, it ended up in a far worse result.

"I'm dead, well that's just great." Dustin said, knocking his player

piece down.

Lucas turned to Mike, who was waiting for Lucas to play. "Actually, I think I'm just gonna call it. We can't get past this, Max. I don't think we should keep going."

Mike gave Lucas a concerned look, before Lucas stood up.

"Alright Max, you ready to go?" Lucas said, reaching his hand towards her.

Max shrugged. "I suppose. I've gotta go home anyway."

Lucas smiled as Max grabbed his hand. The duo walked towards the stairs. Lucas turned back to Mike and Dustin.

"We'll play later, ok?" Lucas asked, but not expecting an answer.

Before Mike or Dustin could say anything, Lucas and Max quickly disappeared up the stairs. Mike sighed as he began to pack up the game.

"Well, it was good while it lasted." Dustin said, helping Mike pick up the individual pieces.

"Now we know how Will felt, huh? I mean, Eleven's in Ohio, Suzie's in Utah, but Max is still here. Why do we even let her play? She only plays whenever she isn't bored with whatever she's doing."

Dustin shook his head slightly. "Well, we agreed to let her play, but I know what you mean. But I should probably get going though. I mean, I don't know what else we're gonna do."

Mike nodded. "It's ok. You can go."

Dustin knew that Mike didn't want him to leave, but Dustin knew he didn't have a choice in the matter. His mother wouldn't have him being out later than he should be.

"Alright, well, have a good night, man. Hey, she's gonna be ok, alright? What can really hurt her over there?"

Mike nodded. "Yeah, I guess you're right."

Dustin patted Mike's back and began walking towards the stairs of the basement.

"Wait!" Mike yelled.

Dustin turned around to face Mike. "What is it?"

Mike sighed. "I'm...sorry. About Eleven and I. I guess I just did--"

Mike was cut off by Dustin's response. "Hey, don't worry about it. This D&D campaign only made up for it."

Mike smiled. "Thanks. See you tomorrow, Dustin."

Dustin waved. "See you tomorrow."

Mike turned back to his D&D table, hearing Dustin's footsteps up the stairs and out of the basement. After waiting a few minutes to make sure that Dustin was gone, Mike walked over to basement window, exposing the beautiful sky that Hawkins had every once in a while. He knew that Eleven would be ok. He didn't get a phone call yet, but he knew that he would get the Byers' number soon enough. He reached for the walkie talkie on the shelf below the window. The crackling noise emitting from the radio was relatively quiet, which is what he wanted. He held the radio tightly in his hands and pressed the button on the side.

"Hey, El? If you can hear me, I...We still miss you. And, even though we may be apart for now, it won't always be like this. We'll be able to see each other again. I'm sure of it. Please...Please respond if you can hear me." Mike said, letting go of the radio's button.

Nothing came from the other side, just static. Dustin looked at his radio with concern. Mike wasn't done with Eleven just yet. He couldn't just let the fact that she's gone get to him. Dustin switched off his radio as he continued his bike ride home.

5. Good or bad luck?

Steve Harrington, former jock and high school student, was finally relieved when the clock hit the right time. Time to leave this shitty place that he called work. He looked around him to see that no one was around. He chuckled to himself. Who's really going to care if the place is clean? The guests only want their goddamn ice-cream, so there's no goddamn point.

Steve walked to the back room and quickly changed out of his "Scoops Ahoy" uniform and back into his regular clothing. A long sleeve blue button up shirt, with a black shirt underneath, complete with long blue jeans. Steve took the hat off of his head and took a look at it. The white hat had red text on it, saying "Scoops Ahoy". Steve shook his head and grabbed his uniform. He didn't want this bullshit job, but he didn't have a choice. He exited the room and walked through the ice cream parlor, simply ignoring the spills of melted ice cream in the room. He closed the security gate to the parlor and locked it.

"This place has had Russian's, upside down monsters, and yet, the ice cream parlor is still standing. Great." Steve said as he walked down the empty halls of the mall.

Steve looked behind him to see tape blocking off the central portion of the mall. It was stupid. Of course Hawkins needed to benefit somehow without most of the mall and an ice cream parlor is perfect for that. Thanks, new mayor of this shitty town of Hawkins. He exited the mall and locked the door behind him.

"Of course, I didn't bring my goddamn car." Steve muttered to himself.

He started walking and didn't even bother to see if he locked the door properly. He tossed the blue uniform over his shoulder with a grunt of frustration.

Minutes passed as Steve continued his trek down the road to his home. Of course it was the one day that he forgot the things that he needed. He reached down into his jeans for his Walkman, only for it

to be missing. He stopped for a moment as he heard something. A crackling noise. Steve began to look around, trying to find the source of the noise. It had to have been from the upside down and Steve knew it. They were back. He heard noise coming from the backyard of a house along the street.

"Gotta stop it." Steve said to himself, as he charged towards the source.

Steve ran through the thick brush to the back of the house, however, he was blocked by a wooden fence. Steve dropped his uniform and hat and began his climb over the fence. As he began to reach the top, he found where the noise was coming from almost immediately. He looked at the orange and black portal and saw a man climbing through it. Steve recognized the man almost immediately.

"Hopper?!" Steve said under his breath.

Hopper didn't hear Steve as he soon fell onto the ground. Steve watched as a woman exited her home and walked over the downed Hopper. She kneeled over and seemed to ask something to Hopper.

Steve jogged over to the woman and Hopper. The woman looked at Steve with confusion.

"Wait, where'd you come from?" The woman asked.

Steve sighed. "I think you have bigger problems on your hands right now. We need to get Ho-...this man to a hospital as soon as possible."

"I think that's the last place that he needs to go to."

Steve cocked his head. "Why exactly?"

The woman pulled out an identification card, showing her status as a scientist at Hawkins Lab. The name on the card read, "Bonnie Ambrose".

"You're from Hawkins Lab?"

Bonnie nodded. "Yes and we don't have time for this. We need to get this man to our replacement laboratory as quickly as possible. I'll get

my car; you try to sit him up against one of these trees."

Steve sighed. "Alright, looks like I'm doing this."

Bonnie immediately took off towards the front of her house. Steve tried to lift Hopper, but the weight of the police officer was more than what Steve could carry. Steve grew tired after a few attempts and sat down next to the unconscious man. He looked at what Hopper was wearing and cocked his head. Why the hell was Hopper wearing a Soviet uniform? Why the hell didn't Hopper get out sooner? Where the hell was he this whole time? Steve shook his head as pushed away the questions.

"You have a lot of explaining to do, bud."

Steve continued to contemplate the memory of something that he didn't expect to see. He sat down on his bed and began to consider what could be done about the return of the Hawkins chief of police.

"This can't be a coincidence. Hop shows up again after a few days, right after the Byers family leaves? Something's wrong about this."

Steve turned to his nightstand to see a radio sitting there. He knew he had to tell someone about Hopper now. He reached for his radio and turned it on.

"Dustin, are you there? Copy?" Steve said into his radio.

Silence.

"Listen, I know you're there, just answer the damn radio." Steve said, pushing the button with a harder intensity.

Silence came at first, but was soon followed by an answer.

"Steve? What are you doing up? You're never up this late." Dustin asked, sounding exhausted.

"Look, I've got something big that I need to tell you. You know Hopper?"

Dustin sighed. "Yes, I know who Hopper is. And yes, I know that he's

been dead for a couple days."

"Well, that fact is going to change."

Dustin sounded concerned on the radio. "What do you mean?"

"I found him. He's alive. He just came through one of those goddamn portals, wearing a Soviet uniform."

Dustin didn't respond immediately. Hopper's back? How the hell did he survive? Dustin pressed the button of his walkie talkie down again.

"Where is he?"

"He's at a replacement for Hawkins Lab underneath the main hospital. He's being treated. I was going to go over there tomorrow to see how he was doing." Steve replied.

"I'll come with you. Just wait for me, ok?"

"Alright, but let me ask the questions, alright Henderson?" Steve said, sounding tired.

"Got it. See you tomorrow. Over and out." Dustin said, silencing his radio once more.

6. The Captives

Eleven looked at Hopper with sadness. His presence gave her the comfort that she so desperately needed. With Mike and Hopper no longer around her, she felt lonely in her own world. The illusion of the chief of police was almost too much for her to look at. Eleven watched as Hopper disappeared into the dark void with no indication that he would do so. Tears rolled down Eleven's face once Hopper faded away into nothingness.

"Hey, El? If you can hear me, I...We still miss you. And, even though we may be apart for now, it won't always be like this. We'll be able to see each other again. I'm sure of it. Please...Please respond if you can hear me." Mike asked from within the void.

Eleven stood there, the water of the void soaking her shoes. She didn't know what she had just heard. She was asleep, yet, she heard Mike's voice. Does that mean? Does she have her powers again? Eleven didn't know how to comprehend it. She turned to face where the voice had come from. Her eyes widened when she saw Mike standing there, holding his walkie-talkie, desperately trying to get Eleven's attention.

Eleven knew what this meant. If she saw Mike and if what she was seeing was real, did she just see her father?

Eleven gasped as she awoke from her dream. She felt her nose and blood began to pour from it. Her mouth remained agape as she realized what her vision had told her. But what if it was just a false vision? She had those before, but she didn't know. She didn't want to think about her father after what happened to him. The memory of his death entered her head again and she broke down with her hands on her face.

A door creaking shook Eleven out of her sadness. She knew it was the front door as it made that noise whenever it was opened. She cautiously escaped her comfortable bed and approached her bedroom door. She looked through the small crack, but saw nothing except for the darkness. Instead, she placed her ear in the crack of the door and heard, ever so slightly, the footsteps of an intruder. She didn't know how to react. Should she run? Fight back? Maybe it's just Jonathan? Eleven knew better; the Byers' were asleep and an intruder had

entered the home.

She closed the bedroom door softly and locked it. She stepped back and tried looking for an alternate escape. The window in her room. She looked at it and froze in terror, as she realized that the window was open. A cold breeze entered the room, adding to the chills that Eleven was feeling at that very moment. Eleven immediately turned to her closet, which was now closed, despite being open when she went to sleep. Whoever it was, was in the closet.

Once Eleven made the connection, the closet door swung open and two men charged at her. Eleven instinctively reached her hands out and the men flew across the room, hitting the wall and causing it to break. She looked at the downed men with shock. Her powers were back. Eleven didn't know how it was possible. One of the two men instantly reached for his radio and began to yell something in Russian. The door to Eleven's bedroom burst open and three men came into the room. Eleven didn't have time to react. She was fighting on two fronts. She pushed the men at the door back, but she was hit on the back of the head by a man behind her. She turned on her back to see the same man kneel down to her.

"Don't even bother. Kill any of us and your family gets it." The man said in a heavy Russian accent.

The man yanked Eleven to her feet and kept a pistol pointed at her back.

"Move, go into the living room, now!" The man yelled, poking Eleven with the pistol.

Eleven gulped, but followed the man's orders. She left the bedroom and entered the living room. She saw at least five other Russian soldiers standing in the living room. On the couches, sat Joyce, Will, and Jonathan, all bound and gagged. Eleven looked on in horror as she saw that Jonathan had a black eye and blood was caked on his face. Joyce had a bruise on her left cheek with blood pouring from it. Will probably had it the worst, or at least, that's what Eleven thought. His face was puffy, as if he had been hit multiple times.

The man holding the gun at Eleven used his other hand to speak into

his radio. "We have the subject, but what do we do with the family?" The man said in Russian.

"Bring them. We need test subjects for Dr. Brenner. We should use them for that." The lead scientist replied in Russian.

The man nodded. "Alright, they will be delivered before the week is out. Over and out." The man said in Russian.

Eleven turned to the man, who pointed the gun at her forehead. "Turn around, now!"

Eleven complied.

The man looked at his men. "Bring them to the vehicle. We need to get moving now!"

The soldiers began to move Will, Joyce, and Jonathan by force to the front of the home. Eleven, however, was simply walking with a gun in her back. As Eleven exited the home, she watched as the soldiers forced the Byers' into the back of a rusty red van.

As Eleven approached the van, the man with the pistol signaled with his pistol. "Get in, or else we'll do to you what we did to them."

Eleven looked at the man. "Why are you doing this?" She said softly.

The man immediately placed the barrel of his pistol on Eleven's forehead. "Did you hear me, you little shit?! Get in the goddamn van, before I beat you!"

Eleven began to shiver. She was terrified. Even more than she was when the "bad men" were chasing her. She was helpless. She had powers, yes, but she couldn't risk those that she called family. Eleven entered the van slowly and sat down next to Will. The Russian soldiers began to pile inside and place blindfolds on the family. Eleven was the last to get a blindfold. As the van began to drive away, Eleven used this opportunity.

She entered the void. She had to warn someone. She saw a figure in front of her that she remembered. Mike. He was holding his radio, as if he was waiting for a response. She had to contact him somehow. She thought

about Hopper, but she didn't know if what her vision told her was true. Mike was the only one that she knew would do everything he could to keep her safe. She walked towards the illusion of Mike, who was cradling the radio.

"Mike! Please help! The bad men, they've taken me and Will and Joyce and Jonathan. Please help me!" The radio spurted.

Mike stared at the radio, dumbfounded. Her powers were back, but she was calling for help.

"Eleven?! Where are you?!" Mike yelled into the microphone.

"One of the men said, Rush-ah! I don't know where that is. Please help me!" Eleven yelled back.

Before Mike could respond, the connection was lost. Mike sat there, terrified. He had no idea what to do.

7. Help has come

Hopper awoke with tired eyes and a groan. He didn't want to get up. After everything that had happened and with Joyce gone, Hopper didn't feel like getting up. He shook his head and quickly awoke. The door to his room opened and Dr. Owens entered, carrying something in his hands. Hopper turned to face the doctor.

"Hey, Jimbo. Awake already?" Dr. Owens said, smiling at the man.

Hopper shook his head. "Never better, doc."

Dr. Owens cleared his throat. "Well, anyway, I got rid of the Soviet uniform and replaced it with this." He tossed a folded beige shirt and pants onto the chair next to Hopper, who quickly recognized what it was.

"Really? You had to bring me this of all things?" Hopper asked, looking at the familiar piece of clothing.

Dr. Owens chuckled. "Well, just because you escaped the upside down doesn't mean you don't get to work. Just put on the damn uniform, ok? Hawkins needs its chief of police."

Dr. Owens walked out of the room and started closing the door, but stopped himself. He stuck his head back through the door.

"Oh by the way. You have a couple of visitors for you. They've got somethin' to tell you." Dr. Owens said, before closing the door.

Hopper cocked his head. Who could they be and what did they want to tell him? He had to find out. He quickly stood up and put on the clothes that Dr. Owens had brought him. He looked at the mirror and began to adjust himself. The chief of police badge was in the right place and his pen was still there. Hopper grabbed his fedora lying on the nightstand and placed it on his head. Just like he expected, it fit him perfectly. He took a deep breath and stared at the door.

"Here goes nothing." Hopper said to himself before exiting the room.

Steve sat in the lobby of the hospital with Dustin sitting next to him.

What was taking so damn long? What could they be doing with Hopper? Dustin turned to Steve with a concerned look on his face.

"So, let me get this straight. You just...found him in someone's backyard and they just happened to work for Hawkins lab?" Dustin asked, sounding skeptical.

Steve smiled. It was typical of Dustin to argue with him over stupid shit. He turned to Dustin.

"Yeah, I don't know how hard that's to understand, Henderson." Steve said, chuckling.

"It just seems too convenient. I mean, come on, Hawkins lab?!" Dustin asked, raising his voice.

Steve raised his arms and shushed. The hospital receptionists looked at the duo with a look of confusion. Steve smiled at them and nodded. The female receptionist simply rolled her eyes and turned back to her work.

"Keep that shit to yourself, ok? The last thing we need is for people to know about the lab, ok?" Steve said, ensuring to stay quiet.

Dustin scoffed, but didn't respond.

Steve looked forward once more, anticipating the arrival of Hopper. However, no such luck came as the hospital corridor only had a few doctors wandering the halls. He didn't know how it was possible. From what he heard, Hopper had been killed in an explosion. What did he do to survive? How could he survive after all this time? *Maybe he was just a secret badass?* Steve chuckled at the thought.

Dustin turned to Steve. "What's so funny?"

Steve shook his head. "Jeez, Henderson. Paranoid about my happiness?"

Before Dustin could respond, he took a glance at the hospital corridor. He simply froze as he saw the man in beige clothing walking towards them.

"Well, I guess you weren't kidding, Steve." Dustin said, standing up, nearly tripping over his backpack.

Steve followed suit and approached Hopper, who was still rather tired. Hopper rubbed his eyes as he approached the duo.

"Are you guys my visitors?" Hopper asked, a small yawn happening afterwards.

Steve nodded. "Yeah, I just wanted to make sure you were...you know...okay. What the hell happened, by the way? Everyone I've talked to said that you died." Steve said, his hands on his hips.

"How did you get out of there?" Dustin asked, trying to get an answer.

Hopper sighed. "Well, not much happened. I just escaped by jumping into a portal, which led to that...other place. I've just been there for a few days, I guess. I escaped through another portal that these guys opened. Next thing I knew, I was back in my own personal hell."

Steve cocked his head. "If you don't mind me asking, why were you wearing...that?"

Hopper smiled. "Trust me, it's better not to know."

Mike sat on his bed, not moving a single inch. He had been frozen in terror ever since the night prior, with Eleven's message. He didn't know who to contact. So many things ran through his mind as he tried to consider the many possibilities. Who was really left to combat this? Mike shook himself out of his paralyzed state and simply looked down at his walkie-talkie, which had been left on. Who could he contact?

"Lucas." Mike said, aloud.

Mike turned the knob on the front of the walkie-talkie, changing the channel. He pressed the button on the side.

"Lucas, can you hear me?" Mike asked, his voice trembling.

No answer.

"Lucas, answer me!" Mike yelled.

Still no response.

"Must be with Max. Why the hell is his radio turned off?" Mike pondered. "Dustin maybe?"

Mike changed the channel on walkie-talkie again and spoke into the device.

"Dustin, can you hear me, over?" Mike asked, hoping for an instant reply.

Dustin turned away from Hopper as he heard the faint voice. It sounded familiar, but he couldn't tell who said it. Before he turned back completely, he heard the voice again.

"Dustin, are you there?" the voice called, faintly.

Dustin recognized the voice as his friend. He quickly ran back to the waiting chairs, where his backpack was. He quickly pulled out the walkie-talkie lying within it.

"Dustin, please. I need your help." Mike asked, hoping for a reply.

Dustin quickly placed the radio next to his mouth. "Yeah, I'm here, buddy. What's going on?"

There was a small pause before Mike's next response. "It's Eleven."

Dustin became shocked at what Mike had said. He turned back to Hopper and Steve, who were still conversing with one another.

"Guys! Get over here!" Dustin yelled.

Steve and Hopper quickly made their way over to Dustin, who was waving them over quickly.

"What's going on, kid?" Hopper asked.

Dustin held the walkie-talkie to his mouth. "What about Eleven?"

"She...she's been taken. By the Russians, I think. She just started

calling for help. Please, help. I didn't know who else contact." Mike said at a very quick pace.

Dustin looked up at Hopper, whose mouth was merely agape at the information given. He quickly snatched the radio out of Dustin's hand.

"How long ago did this happen?" Hopper asked.

Mike was confused. He swore that he had heard Hopper's voice over the radio.

"Um, Hopper?" Mike asked, trying to confirm the man's identity.

"Yes, kid, it's me. Yeah, I know. People thought I was dead, but that doesn't matter. Did Eleven say where she was going or anything? Come on kid, tell me something!" Hopper said, growing anxious.

"She said that she was being taken to Russia, but I don't know where or why." Mike said quickly.

Hopper paused for a moment and turned to Steve and Dustin. He frowned as he placed the walkie-talkie up to his mouth.

"I think I know where they've taken her."

8. A Stubborn Daughter

Minor Warning: This chapter is a little bit darker than the prior ones in terms of tone.

She was terrified. The room she was in was completely dark and no noise had been emitted for some time. Eleven wanted, so badly, to use her powers, but she knew the ramifications of such an act. The ropes ate at her forearms tied to the old, wooden chair that seemingly hadn't been used in decades. She could feel the blood pouring from her head, where she had been punched by a man of Russian descent. She closed her eyes, yet she didn't escape the darkness that had lurked all around her.

Eleven entered the void with a sense of desperation. Despite prior attempts, she only watched as the people she loved and care for disappear from the void. She was determined to find them this time.

"I think I know where they've taken her." A voice called out from within the void.

Eleven turned towards the familiar sound and a slight smile appeared on her face judging by who she saw. They were coming, all of them were. At least she hoped that was the case.

A sudden sound and bright light broke Eleven's connection with the void and she looked to see a figure standing in the doorway. The light revealed more of Eleven's injuries. The left side of her face was bruised, with scratches on her arms from the tugging of the rope. As she tried to make out the identity of the figure, she noticed the man's posture and the silhouette, presenting a shadow to her. There was no mistaking who the man was.

"It's alright now, Eleven. You're safe here and we're together again." The man said, walking into the room, turning on its light.

The light illuminated and reflected off of the man's silver hair, presented by a man in a suit.

"P...Papa?" Eleven whimpered.

Dr. Brenner nodded. "I'm glad you remember me, Eleven. Your papa's okay and he's going to take care of you now."

Eleven couldn't comprehend what she was seeing. She remembered seeing him being attacked. He was a goner. Why was he still alive?

Brenner knelt down to Eleven's height and placed his hand on her bruised face.

"How could those heartless bastards harm such an innocent girl? My daughter. I suppose it's necessary seeing as how you...are so stubborn to refuse to see me again. If it makes any difference to you, Eleven, I am grateful that you are here now and we can continue the bond that was broken, oh so many years ago."

Eleven turned away from him, the rope around her neck giving her a burn. Brenner simply sighed and stood to his feet.

"It's time to go, Eleven. We have work to do."

The large room was surrounded by bright fluorescent lights. Two guards wearing Russian uniforms guarded the only entrance to the room. In the middle of the room sat Jonathan, Will, and Joyce Byers, all in the same state of disarray.

"You bastards! What have you done with her?! I swear to god, if you laid a finger on her, I'll tear you apart!" Joyce yelled at the Russian guards.

They simply laughed and regained their status shortly thereafter. There came a knock at the door and one of the guards opened it, revealing Dr. Brenner. He walked in front of the three family members and placed his arms behind his back.

"You three ruined the experiments that had taken place over three years ago, along with the others, who we are looking for now. Now, don't worry, we have no plans to kill you, that much is certain. All we want is your unconditional ability to work as our...guinea pigs, so to speak." Brenner turned his head to the door. "Come in now, Eleven."

Eleven entered the room with Joyce immediately gasping at the sight of the poor girl. The guards had their guns immediately aimed at

Eleven, ensuring that her powers would not be used. Eleven walked to Brenner and stood beside him. He placed his hand on her shoulder.

"What is this? Just a revenge plot?!" Jonathan yelled, blood emerging from his mouth.

Brenner simply chuckled and spoke in a soft tone. "I wouldn't call it revenge. I would merely call it...elimination. We will find the others soon, those that were away of what went on within the Hawkins national laboratory. We cannot allow that information to simply...float within society."

Brenner turned towards Will, whose head was simply hanging down during the whole exchange.

"Wake him up, Eleven." Brenner ordered.

Eleven shook her head. "I can't hurt him, Papa. I don't want to."

"You will do as I say, Eleven. Do you want what happened to you to happen again? I surely don't want to see it again, despite its cooperative results from you. You...will do as I say."

Eleven turned towards Will and raised her arm towards him.

"Don't use a minuscule amount of power, Eleven. Use it at full force. I know when you don't. Don't make this any worse for your...friend."

Eleven lower lip shook as she could feel the power coursing through her arm and the feeling of it leaving her fingertips.

"AHHHH! Stop! Please!" Will suddenly awoke, screaming.

"Keep going, Eleven." Brenner said, a devious look in his eye.

Eleven naturally obeyed her father's orders, almost instinctively. The punishments would be worse than the bathtub, Eleven knew that. She continued her surge of power, causing Will to scream in pain. The screams brought tears to Eleven's eyes as she watched her friend wail about. She could feel his pain.

Brenner placed his hand on Eleven's shoulder. "You may stop now,

Eleven. He's awake."

Eleven stopped immediately as she had the ability to. Tears flowed down Will's cheeks as he stared at Eleven.

"I'm sorry." Eleven mouthed to Will, in order for Brenner not to hear.

Joyce began to move frantically in her chair, her bindings beginning to dig into her forearms.

"You're going to hell, Brenner! I'll make sure to send you there myself!"

Brenner simply waved his finger towards the frantic woman.

"If you continue your resistance, you'll have to watch your son, Jonathan, is it? You 'll have to watch him suffer before your very eyes. Maybe he'll even meet his demise, at your hands. I would stop if you want to see him live another day."

Joyce knew she had to surrender, she couldn't let Eleven being forced to harm anyone. Her frantic movements stopped and she fell into a relaxed state.

Eleven was distracted by a slight noise that was coming from directly above her. She looked up, with her eyes solely, and noticed a loudspeaker that was emitting a slight crackling noise. Her instincts immediately kicked into action. As Brenner continued his talk with Joyce, Eleven closed her eyes and tuned into the crackling noise.

Eleven's connection with the void was poor, but she had to do something. An illusion of Hopper was directly in front of her. He appeared to be surrounded by Dustin, Steve, and Mike. Hopper was holding a radio in his hand, but Eleven could tell where he was. The cabin that she had become accustomed to all too well. She quickly moved to the group standing close to one another. She pressed the button on the radio and began to speak into it.

"They're looking for you guys. You have to stay hidden. They...want to...eliminate." Eleven's voice emerged from the radio.

Hopper was immediately taken aback as he heard her voice. Dustin,

Steve, and Mike couldn't believe it either. Mike immediately snatched the radio from Hopper's hand.

"Eleven, are you okay?! What's going on?!" Mike yelled into the radio.

"No time...they are looking for you...don't let them find you. Joyce... Will...Jonathan, taken. Please...help." Eleven said, cutting in and out before the static disappeared.

Hopper snatched the radio back and pressed the button.

"El?!"

Absolute silence.

"EL?!"

Once again, no response.

Hopper lowered his head, looking down at the floor.

"What did she mean by, "They're looking for you."? Was that a clue of some kind?" Steve asked.

"It means the Russians are looking for us, dumbass. Who else would be looking for us?" Dustin replied, answering a seemingly obvious question.

"What now, Hop? What's the plan?" Steve asked.

Hopper simply froze for a moment, trying to take everything in. He looked up to the trio standing in front of him.

"We need to get everyone to a safe location, this cabin. No one knows where it is and they have to stay here until we get them back. We have to move, now!" Hopper said, placing the radio on his belt.

The trio simply followed Hopper out of the cabin with no questions. Hopper walked to his new police truck, which was the most recent Chevrolet Blazer model. He hated it. Mike followed him to the truck while Dustin followed Steve to his car. As Mike and Hopper entered the car, so did the other duo. As Hopper started the truck and drove

down the dirt path, he turned to Mike, whose head was down.

"We'll get her back, Mike. We will." Hopper said, nodding as if agreeing to his own statement.

"You're damn right." Mike replied, before going back to his prior posture.

Hopper looked in his rear-view mirror to see Steve following behind in his car. He sighed as he continued down the dirt trail and onto the main highway. He didn't know how he was going to get to Russia, but he knew that he would find a way.